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The Primitive Slavs

121 The object of this study is to provide a fairly detailed account of the Slavs from their first appearance in history to their emergence in modern times as a group of nations akin in race and language, but diversified by the cultural and political influences to which they have been exposed.

[161] Numerically the Slavs are the largest linguistic group in
131 Europe, including some two hundred million people. Located
175* in the eastern section of the European Continent, they were long remote from the civilization which grew up on the northern shore of the Mediterranean, and thus were late in assuming an active political role. In early medieval times their lack of organization made them an easy prey to nations of higher material culture and more intense political aspirations; consequently the hostility between German and Slav is a historical factor of long standing. The geographical situation of the Slavs not only set them as a natural bulwark against nomadic invaders from Asia, but also exposed them to Asiatic cultural influences and to the infusion of alien blood. Their very numbers and their remote habitations retarded their cultural advance, as did also the domination of the unenlightened mass by an intelligent minority touched in varying degree by foreign
186 civilizations. Hence the absence of any pervasive tradition of
175* native culture has repeatedly prevented the development of